

## Basic Watercolor Experiments

Before beginning a painting, practice some of the basic methods used by watercolorists. Use a sheet of paper (you can even experiment on the types but a sheet of watercolor paper will give the best effects). I like to grid the paper into sections by using masking tape. That way I have individual areas for each experiment without "wasting" alot of good paper.

1. Wet-on-wet: brush clean water onto the paper. Add pigment to the wet areas. Notice how the color spreads.
2. Wet-on-dry: on a dry piece of paper draw with a brush loaded with wet pigment. Notice this time how the color does not run and is controlled.
3. Graduated wash: brush clean water onto the paper. Using almost pure pigment draw a line across the top of the page. Tilt your board up slightly. Then with a clean brush gently go across the bottom of the line allowing the paint to run down. Keep rinsing your brush.
4. Even Wash: brush clean water onto the paper. Keep the brush loaded with the same amount of pigment and water each time to make broad areas of color.
5. Dry brush: remove most of the water from a brush by wiping it on paper: then put pigment on it and paint with the almost dry brush. Part of the paper will show through the brush-strokes. This technique works best with a stiffer, bristle brush.
6. Blotted: Load your brush with paint and lay in an area of color on the paper. Wad a tissue and use it to blot into the wet paint. This gives an interesting texture.
7. Use a darker color (such as blue or purple) lay in an area of paint. Before it dries sprinkle salt over it. Allow the paint to completely dry and then brush off excess salt. This can be used to create winter scenes or background flowers.
8. Splatter on wet: brush clean water onto the paper. Gently tap on your hand a brush loaded with pigment. Be careful not to touch the paper with the brush- the paint should splatter and spread out. This makes good distant flowers. (Note: Although this might seem to an experiment that would be messy, it can be controlled so that others in the room don't become spotted with paint.)
9. Splatter on dry: This is the same as #8 except that the paper is dry. The splatters of paint remain in one spot. Be sure to use several colors. This creates flowers that are closer to the viewer.
10. Scraping: This can be done on either wet or dry paper. Take a palette knife, a tooth pick, or even the end of the brush and scrape some lines on the paper. In some cases the result will be dark lines where the pigment pools. If you scrape over dried pigment, the lines will be white. This technique makes good grasses and weeds.
11. Watercolor resist: This technique is done prior to laying in any paint on your surface. You can use crayons (stained glass effect), white crayon (leaves areas white), rubber cement (let this dry completely, then paint...dried cement can be rolled off when you are finished), masking tape, elmers glue (this glue remains a part of your picture and cannot be removed), and a commercially prepared masking fluid ( can be expensive a not really advisable in the elementary grades, I don't think).

FINALLY, HAVE FUN WITH WATERCOLOR. IT'S REALLY NOT HARD!